

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Science, the Occult, and the Conservative Project of Late Victorian and Edwardian British Mummy Fiction

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This study examines late Victorian and Edwardian British mummy fiction as a response to the manifold anxieties of the last twenty or so years of the nineteenth century up to the First World War in Great Britain. Mummy narratives of this time reveal the genre to be a very flexible one, partaking not only of the expected Gothic form, but also making fascinating stories out of invasion narratives and mystery fiction, all the while commenting on—and trying to solve—the various challenges of the day. After an introductory chapter that sets the stage for my project, I examine problems of empire and worries about a failing masculinity in the second and third chapters of my study. My fourth chapter looks at the epistemological competition of science and the occult as ways of knowing. I conclude my examination of mummy fiction with a look at silent mummy films as a way to look ahead at the changes that occurred when mummy narratives began to be told in visual form. The whole of the project is examined through a New Historical approach, as I attempt to delineate the place of mummy fiction within the broader discourses of the period. The picture that emerges from the study is one that depicts a

worried nation concerned with scientific and social advancement while at the same time largely working to maintain the status quo.